The Spirit sees not; yet seeing not, he sees. For the energy that dwelt in sight cannot cease because it is everlasting. —*Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad*

THEOSOPHY

VOLUME 55 OCTOBER, 1967 NUMBER 12

SELF AND SOUL

SELF is the stillness and soul the motion of life. There is nothing but the self and its field, and the field is made by the activity of the soul—generated, initially, by the soul's ideation. And so we have the triune basis of all manifested reality: the subject, the object, and the relation between.

The self is all-seeing, which is to say that it sees no-thing—only what the soul brings into focus by its ideations, and then, by perception of the forms of its ideations. When the soul at last turns its gaze inward, seeking introspectively for the all-seeing Self, there is the beginning of the Great Return. And when the soul *finds* the Self, the cycle of ideation is over; there is no more creation, no more "evolution," only realization.

Meanwhile, we live in a universe experienced as analogues of self and soul. Whatever men identify as "real" becomes by that identification an analogue of self—that upon which the heart is set.

> Whatever plane our consciousness may be acting in, both we and the things belonging to that plane are, for the time being, our only realities. As we rise in the scale of development we perceive that during the stages through which we have passed we mistook shadows for realities, and the upward progress of the Ego is a series of progressive awakenings, each advance bringing with it the idea that now, at last, we have reached "reality"; but only when we shall have reached the absolute Consciousness, and blended our own with it, shall we be free from the delusions produced by Maya. (*The Secret Doctrine* I, 40.)

To say, "now, at last," is to submit to a state of feeling, which is

a kind of union with something. To be a man is to be capable of partial unions; and to be a man is also to pass from such a union to one more complete. These passages of change are what H.P.B. calls "progressive awakenings." How can a man tell about the state of union which now gives him his sense of "reality"? Only by what it leads him to think and do in relation to other men and forms of life in the world. He has to ask himself: What does this state of feeling shut out? Whom does it include?

Union of the self with the Self absorbs all the pairs of opposites. The disappearance of the not-Self is thus a result of entering into that state where there is only Self—"the absolute Consciousness."

A man gains his certainty, and therefore his resolve, through feeling. Feelings are acts of the soul. By feeling the soul declares its sense of identity. By feeling the soul marks off the boundaries of its being, or extends them. By feeling the soul settles all questions of good and evil.

A man may deceive others about what he thinks, and he may also deceive himself. He deceives himself by ignoring those departments of his being which remain unreconciled to what he believes he thinks—they feel differently. The feeling nature is imperious. It casts out doubt. It submits to no deliberation. Through feeling, the announcement, "I am," delineates the character of the being which "is," at that time. Conflicts of feeling are conflicts about the nature of the self, and eventually they bring pain to the individual and pain to the societies of men.

Universal feelings cannot come to those who do not think universal thoughts; or if they come, they suffer distorting limitation. By thought a man attempts to take his feelings to school. By thought based upon principle he comes to see that he must take even his "good" feelings to school. For from his good feelings—the feelings which give him a sense of wholeness, and sometimes of righteousness—he falls into the habit of not questioning himself. And a man who does not question himself is certain to suffer pain when the time comes for one of his "awakenings." If the pain threatens to be more than he can bear, he may turn away from the awakening. And then, alas, he may turn away, also, from his teacher, or from whatever has helped him to reach the threshold of awakening. And thus are born, in the progress of time, all the sectarian doctrines which celebrate partisan unities.

When a man takes comfort in the feeling that he is right, he is

likely to experience pain in the presence of others whom he does not understand. Their thoughts may be poorer than his, or better, or simply different; what matters is that he cannot bring himself to try to understand them. He shuts them out of his world. But they will not stay out. They come back again and again, by all the numberless paths of karmic action, requiring to be recognized as a part of the reality he seeks.

There is a lesson in all this. Thoughts shut out for comfort's sake are thoughts which seem to deserve condemnation and blame. And then, because one may have heard that blaming is a tendency which must be put aside, there is sometimes this little charade: the righteous man generously withdraws blame, but fails in his determination to understand. His goodness, he tells himself, is beyond compare.

The pageant of human behavior is filled with scenes made by men pursuing cherished analogues of the self. At the beginning of a historical cycle, there are positive feelings of identification with a new dream of the good. Wonderful things happen in the field created by souls who actively play out, in full faith, the drama of their common dream of reality.

Then, with limitation, opposition, and failures which are difficult to understand because they were not in the dream, comes the time preparatory for awakening. The part of the universe shut out by the dream asserts itself. The wonderful feeling which inspired all at the beginning can no longer be generated. The external shape of the dreams of other men intrude, offering other, contradictory analogues of self and soul. Righteousness invokes its stern allies of resentment and anger, and the world of adventure and high achievement turns into a world afflicted by evil. The analogues of the not-Self are now personified in the thoughts and works of other men. The day of awakening—or of reckoning—is at hand.

And so ancient history becomes modern, old cycles reappear. Another moment of choice in respect to "reality" is presented in new guise. The feelings of men are once again tested for their fidelity, not to the images of the dying dream, but to the constant processes of awakening, which are both the same and not the same. Those who have taken their feelings to school—who have tried with all their hearts to cleave to the principle of growth, instead of to the limiting and now failing dream—are the ones who are able to make a new beginning.

THOUGHTS IN SOLITUDE

I

WITHIN the symbols and doctrines of the Christian Church may indeed lie hidden all the truths of the Occult Philosophy, and another and abler pen has already traced the correspondences, but it is necessary to realize differences as well as likenesses, and while Christianity, as a definite system, has embodied for the world many noble ideas, it seems to the writer to have been able to display only one facet of the divine jewel of Truth—to have been able to trace only a short line of the celestial circle of Wisdom.

Putting aside all such unphilosophical dogmas, as a personal anthropomorphic God—atonement by the vicarious sacrifice of another—eternal damnation and such like, which may be regarded as the outworks of the Creed, and which indeed many of its own professors deny or minimize, and coming to the essential kernel of the system—the inner stronghold of the faith—that which would be regarded as such by all its truest sons throughout these nearly nineteen centuries of its existence, it would yet seem to be but a one-sided statement—a partial view—compared with the all-embracing Catholicity of the Occult Wisdom.

Unfortunately the outworks and excrescences above referred to, have, during these many centuries, so warped the thoughts and feelings of the populations professing this religion that it is no longer the pure and exalted doctrine as preached by its founder, but something very different. There are, no doubt, here and there good and noble souls, who practise the higher virtues of Christianity, but they are in such a minority that they are quite unable to affect the popular standard.

When one begins to analyse the stupendous outgrowth called Western Civilization, of which steam and electricity, in their practical uses, may be regarded as the types, and to ask how and by what means this vast fabric has arisen, we are informed by those who are able to see below the mere surface of things that the setting

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NOTE.—This article was first printed by Wm. Q. Judge in the *Path* for January, 1887.

of men's minds in a certain direction must have been the factor, and it is only logical that if a man's highest religious duty is put before him as the saving of his own soul from perdition, a tendency of mind which may be characterized as the supremely selfish must naturally be set in motion. When the converging lines of heredity through many generations have so strengthened this tendency that it has become a potent factor, the development *"in excelsis"* of the purely intellectual faculties as dissociated from the moral will be seen to be the inevitable result, and from this has naturally evolved the Western Civilization which is spoken of with so much pride. But are not nations like trees to be known by their fruits? "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?"

What sins are dwelt on with more emphatic reprobation throughout the whole teachings of Christ than those of hypocrisy and cupidity? And where is hypocrisy deeper than within the Christian fold? So deep indeed, that it has become an integral part of the nature, and is no more recognized as a vice than it was by the Pharisees of old. And where is the worship of mammon more rampant than throughout the length and breadth of Christendom? The preachers of the Churches may utter faint-hearted protests, but the nations nevertheless remain prostrate before their idol, and as steam and electricity extend their sway, and new countries are laid open to modern progress, the more primitive races, to avoid extinction, join in the mad competition for wealth. But whether conspicuously shown in the acts of States lustful to conquer fresh territory, or hidden in the individual character, where it displays itself in the haste to grow rich by fair means or foul, it remains none the less a gnawing canker at the heart of Christendom.

What a gulf there lies between the practice of modern Europe and the divine teachings of the Master:

> Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon Earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

And again:

> Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.

There is probably no teaching more thoroughly altruistic in its character, and which, if it could be literally applied, would exercise

so direct and beneficial an influence on the human race as the teaching of Christ, but to the impartial student there seems to be none, the spirit of whose revelation has been more perverted and degraded by his followers of all denominations, and following the spiritual law whose complement on the physical plane may be recognized in the axiom that action and reaction are equal, the moral light to which Christ's teachings soared is the measure which decides the depth to which such teaching, when perverted, must inevitably fall, and Christendom may veritably be said to have become Anti-Christian.[1] All the religions of the world have more or less lost the divine afflatus by which they were originally vivified, but it has been reserved for Christianity to mould the life of the nations from the very blackness of the shadows cast by the "Light of the World."

When we ask to what goal or catastrophe this Western Civilization is hurrying, it is still more necessary to have the eyes of those who are able to read the signs of the times. The following is an extract from a letter to which many of the above ideas may be traced which was signed "a Turkish Effendi" (in the absence of any right to suggest the real and more authoritative name), and was published by his correspondent in Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine of January, 1880:

> The persistent violation for centuries of the great altruistic laws propounded and enjoined by the great founder of the Christian religion, must inevitably produce a corresponding catastrophe; and the day is not far distant when modern civilization will find, that in its great scientific discoveries and inventions, devised for the purpose of ministering to its own extravagant necessities, it has forged the weapons by which it will itself be destroyed. No better evidence of the truth of this can be found than in the fact that Anti-Christendom alone is menaced with the danger of a great class revolution: already in every so-called Christian country we hear the mutterings of the coming storm, when labor and capital will find themselves arrayed against each other—when rich and poor will meet in deadly antagonism, and the spoilers and the spoiled solve, by means of the most recently invented artillery, the economic problems of modern "progress." It is surely a remarkable fact that this struggle between rich and poor is specially reserved for those whose religion inculcates upon them as the highest law—the love of their neighbor—and most strongly denounces the love of money. No country which does not bear the name Christian is thus threatened.

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[1] It is an old declaration of the esoteric doctrine that "the counterfeit religion will last as long as the true one."—[ED. *Path*.]

But to return from this long digression, take Christianity, I say, in its loftiest ideal, as taught and practised by its founder—and it certainly is a very lofty one—altruism in its most sublimated form—self-sacrifice incarnate upon Earth—giving of its life-blood to raise the sons of men, and drawing all to Him by the sheer force of divine love, until the believer's heart is set on flame, and nothing seems worthy in his eyes short of absolute union with this divine personality who is at once his Saviour, his brother and his God.

Yet were you to analyse the thoughts and feelings of the most ecstatic saint, would they display more than an ardent soul, a devout mind and a holy life?

Those of the Dualist Philosophy might indeed argue that such an one had his feet well planted on the narrow way—but the students of the wider Philosophy of Nature know well that everything on Earth—religion included—is under the governance of natural law. The attainment of perfection is not to be achieved by sentiment alone—*it is a scientific process,* and knowledge is the supreme enlightener.

The devotion of Bhakti is indeed a necessary prelude to progress in the religious life, under the guidance of whichever special cult the neophyte may aspire, but it is as it were the outer court of the Temple, and the Holy of Holies cannot be reached by any save those who have attained knowledge.

Without some previous study of occult writings, this word knowledge will entirely fail to carry home the idea which it is intended to express, and let alone the liability to misinterpretation from this cause, how can anyone pretend to describe it who has himself none of this knowledge, who has not yet trodden one step of the path that leads there, and who can only strain with vague imagination towards the sublime conception of the inmost workings of Nature through her manifold diversity laid bare before the intuitive vision? However, although it is an act of temerity on the writer's part, these few words may convey some idea to those who are no further on the path than himself.

When the lower states of consciousness have been so welded in the fire of supreme emotion that duty, though involving the most appalling sacrifice, is no longer a thing to strive after with pain and struggle, but is a natural outcome of the life—the absolute expression of unity with nature—when the higher faculties, emotional,

ethical and intellectual, whose respective functions may be said to be the perceiving of the Beautiful, the Good, and the True, have been so merged in one that the Buddhi or divine spark which hitherto flickered, becomes a bright, steady, luminous flame—when the "Explosion," as St. Martin called it, has taken place, "by which our natural will is forever dispersed and annihilated by contact with the divine,"—then and then only is one fit to begin to tread the path of knowledge.

That it leads altogether beyond human experience, and entirely transcends what we can conceive is but too apparent.

The 15th and 16th Rules in the second part of *"Light on the Path"* may help towards a vague apprehension of what this knowledge means.

15th. Inquire of the earth, the air and the water of the secrets they hold for you. The development of your inner senses will enable you to do this.

16th. Inquire of the holy ones of the earth of the secrets they hold for you. The conquering of the desires of the outer senses will give you the right to do this.

And the final secret of all may be said to be wrapped up in the mystery of "self." When the knowledge of the individualization of Being is reached, man has learned all that this world can teach him, and in the words "Know thyself" lie folded the ultimate possibilities of Humanity. Knowledge is indeed the supreme enlightener.

> There is no purifier like thereto
> In all this world, and he who seeketh it
> Shall find it—being grown perfect—in himself.

Whether any intelligible idea as to the knowledge itself can be evolved from what is here written—it will at least be apparent that a goodness so exalted as to be scarcely imaginable as a human attribute is required as the necessary qualification for the commencement of the search.

Well did Shelley write in his Prometheus:

> The good want power but to weep barren tears
> The powerful goodness want—worse need for them.
> The wise want love; and those who love want wisdom.
> And all best things are thus confused to ill.
> Many are strong and rich, and would be just
> But live among their suffering fellow-men
> As if none felt: they know not what to do.

and the current Theologies of the world have not been able to re-

move the reproach. In the case of Christianity the failure may, to a great extent, be owing to its sentimentality and its failure to realize that to be supremely good it is necessary to be wise—though wise with a higher wisdom than that referred to in the above lines.

But Christianity's greatest fall has probably been its disregard of the facts of Reincarnation. Whatever interpretation may be put on the great Master's utterance on this subject, and however the early church may have regarded it, it is notorious that Christianity, as interpreted by its mediæval and modern professors alike, has entirely ignored the evolution of the soul progressing through innumerable earthly existences, and has instead adopted the illogical and unphilosophic dogma of a human soul born into the world from nothingness and meriting by its 70 or 80 years of earth-life an Eternity of bliss or an Eternity of misery.

But one does not expect of the child the reason-guided actions of mature manhood—its teachings must be given in the form of dogma, to which it must yield implicit obedience. Nor do we expect the infant school to provide the same training that the University does for the cultured intellect. Similarly the various Religions of the world have been the infant schools for growing Humanity until the complete stature of manhood should be reached.

It has been remarked by some Christians who are much enamored of the self-devoted love exhibited by the Founder of their faith, and the strong feeling of personal love and attachment thereby called forth from them, that Theosophy is cold because it does not dwell exclusively on that side of the nature, but while each separate Religion that has existed in the world may be regarded as the analysis of one special characteristic of the mind, the occult philosophy gathers into one synthetical whole all its varied characteristics. The different religions accentuating as they do different truths may be regarded at the same time—according as one looks at them from the scientific or religious standpoint—and both views are equally tenable and mutually comprehensive—as natural evolutions of the peoples among whom they arose, and as revelations from the unseen universe of partial truths which have to be received and assimilated before mankind can be fitted to comprehend the Supreme Truth in its abstract purity.

It will be seen from the foregoing that what we call Theosophy is the supreme expression of all Religion, as it is the final synthesis

of all Science—for it is faith merged in Knowledge.

When one looks abroad on the world and sees how few even among the Religious, the Cultured and the Intellectual are able to grasp the truth by intuitive vision—while the masses of mankind are sunk in degradation and semi-barbarity, the mind is lost in the vistas of the future, during which the present Religions or those which may have taken their place will have to continue their work of teaching.

Education is slow and Evolution is tardy, and the whole circle of wisdom is slow to trace; but the march of Nature has been as it was bound to be—for the best—and the line of Pope

"One truth is clear, whatever is is right."

seems more and more to be borne in upon the mind as an Eternal verity.

Destiny has guided us till now, and has made us what we are, but we who now realize the omnipotence of the divinely guided *Will,* have become potentially the makers—let us take it in our hands and shape our own career, for the sooner we rise to the heights of our being, the sooner shall we be able to stretch down helping hands to the suffering humanity of To-day.

PILGRIM

AFFIRMATION

Faith and hope arise out of agnosticism, but they go on to proclaim an affirmation about the unknowable. There is a leap of faith which can be taken only as an act of courage in which a man says, "Although the categories of experience yield evidence that is at best ambiguous and is sometimes indicative of the finality of death and the triumph of evil, I *nevertheless* decide to trust that there is a deathless source of human life in which the meaning created within human history is conserved and brought to fulfillment." It is in this positing of the trustworthiness of the ground of life that we find the essential element of the religious consciousness.

—SAM KEEN

letters • questions • comment

In the Bhagavad-Gita *there are three qualities which are said to "bind the imperishable soul to the body." They are* sattva, *light or truth;* rajas, *desire; and* tamas, *indifference or darkness. In this case desire is the second of the three, yet do we not sometimes exhibit desire for truth and at other times desire for idleness or indifference? Does not desire reach beyond the physical nature, beyond desires of the emotional nature, so that we desire to achieve a particular psychological state, or desire an intellectual attainment? Is desire separate from the other two qualities?*

The student of Theosophy soon learns the truth of William Q. Judge's statement in *The Ocean of Theosophy* regarding the English language, "for as that has grown up in a struggle with nature and among a commercial people it has not as yet coined the words needed for designating the great range of faculties and organs of the unseen man." Certainly the word "desire" is an excellent example of this lack of clarity based on an inadequately developed concept. As theosophical texts are studied, it is found that desire has many meanings, many applications, and that often an entire sentence is not sufficient to describe just which aspect of a subject is under consideration. But when we turn to Sanskrit, it becomes evident that the desire referred to in the question is one of the three *gunas,* "divisions of the correlations of matter and nature" (*Glossary*) and represents form and change. If we take these two characteristics as describing rajas, we can see that it is at once set apart from the other two *gunas,* sattva and tamas. Rajas as *form* is thus opposed to sattva because light, or truth, very nearly approaches formlessness; and, on the other hand, rajas as *change* seems the antithesis of tamas whose characteristic of indifference approaches immobility or inertia.

This, then, is the paradox. Rajas, desire, is quite unlike either sattva or tamas, yet the three are conjoined in all human beings. Think of a piece of fabric. It is composed of separate threads called

warp and woof, which run lengthwise and horizontally. In order to achieve the entity we call "fabric" it is necessary to interweave these diverse elements; and we do this according to a chosen pattern, a pattern we desire. So when we look at man we can expect to find truth, or wisdom, working in and upon rajas and tamas. We can expect to find the activity of rajas affecting both sattva and tamas. And the steadfastness which might replace tamas would affect the functions of both sattva and rajas.

Further on in this fourteenth chapter of the *Gita,* Arjuna asks about the man who has overcome these qualities—by what means has he conquered them and what are his characteristics? In the reply, we find that the wise man does not lead a life of denial. He is persuaded "that the qualities exist" but he "is moved not by them." It is a sign of his true wisdom that he is convinced that there is that which is superior to the three qualities. He does not hate them, nor seek them out, and so is free from attachment through aversion or attraction. His separation from the influence of the three qualities is based on an attitude of non-identification. In effect, man's attachment to any one of the three qualities results in his separation in understanding from the "rootless root," the true center of his being.

In *The Secret Doctrine* we find this statement:

> The Universe is called, with everything in it, MAYA, because all is temporary therein, from the ephemeral life of a fire-fly to that of the Sun. Compared to the eternal immutability of the ONE, and the changelessness of that Principle, the Universe, with its evanescent ever-changing forms, must be necessarily, in the mind of a philosopher, no better than a will-o'-the-wisp. Yet, the Universe is real enough to the conscious beings in it, which are as unreal as it is itself.

The challenge which such a concept presents to the student, forcing him to expand his idea of reality and at the same time, particularly through the doctrine of Karma, giving him the basis for action in this "unreal" world, is truly educative. A significant part of the knowledge of that world is familiarity with its constitution as described by the three qualities.

THE WISDOM RELIGION

Occultism or Magic: II

OUR Society believes in *no* miracle, diabolical or human, nor in anything which eludes the grasp of either philosophical and logical induction, or the syllogistic method of deduction. But if the corrupted and comparatively modern term of "Magic" is understood to mean the higher study and knowledge of Nature and deep research into her hidden powers—those Occult and mysterious laws which constitute the ultimate essence of every element—whether with the ancients we recognize but four or five, or with the moderns over sixty; or, again, if by Magic is meant that ancient study within the sanctuaries, known as the "worship of the Light," or divine and spiritual wisdom—as distinct from the worship of darkness or ignorance—which led the initiated High-priests of antiquity among the Aryans, Chaldæans, Medes and Egyptians to be called Maha, Magi or Maginsi, and by the Zoroastrians Meghistam (from the root Meh'ah, great, learned, wise)—then, we Theosophists "plead guilty."

We do study that "Science of sciences," extolled by the Eclectics and Platonists of the Alexandrian Schools, and *practised* by the Theurgists and the Mystics of every age. If Magic gradually fell into disrepute, it was not because of its intrinsic worthlessness, but through misconception and ignorance of its primitive meaning, and, especially the cunning policy of Christian theologians, who feared lest many of the phenomena produced by and *through* natural (though Occult) law should give the direct lie to, and thus cheapen, "Divine biblical miracle," and so forced the people to attribute every manifestation that they could not comprehend or explain to the direct agency of a personal devil.

Plato, and even the sceptical Lucian, both recognized the high wisdom and profound learning of the Magi; and Cicero, speaking of those who inhabited Persia in his times, calls them "sapientium et doctorum genus majorum." And if so, we must evidently believe that these Magi or "magicians" were not such as London sees at a

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Note.—This is the final installment of a series begun in November, 1966. The sources are *A Modern Panarion* and *The Secret Doctrine*.

shilling a seat—nor yet certain fraudulent spiritual mediums. The Science of such Theurgists and Philosophers as Pythagoras, Plotinus, Porphyry, Proclus, Bruno, Paracelsus, and a host of other great men, has now fallen into disrepute. But had our Brother Theosophist, Thomas Alva Edison, the inventor of the telephone and the phonograph, lived in the days of Galileo, he would have surely expiated on the rack or at the stake his sin of having found the means to fix on a soft surface of metal, and preserve for long years, the sounds of the human voice, for his talent would have been pronounced the gift of hell. And yet, such an abuse of brute power to suppress truth would not have changed a scientific discovery into a foolish and disreputable superstition.

"Magic" *is brought into every line of the sacred books of the Aryans.* Magic is indispensable for the comprehension of either of the six great schools of Âryan philosophy. And it is precisely to understand them, and thus enable ourselves to bring to light the hidden *summum bonum* of that mother of all Eastern Philosophies known as the *Vedas,* and the later Brâhmanical literature, that we study it.

The conditions of occult study are so peculiar that nothing is more difficult than to give one's "authorities" for any statement connected with it, but none the less is it really just as far from being "up in a balloon" as any study can be. It has been explained repeatedly that the continuity of occult knowledge amongst initiated adepts is the attribute about it which commends their explanations—absolutely to the acceptance of those who come to understand what initiation means, and what kind of people adepts are. From Swedenborg onwards there have been many seers who profess to gather their knowledge of other worlds from actual observation, but such persons are isolated, and subject to the delusions of isolation. Any intelligent man will have an intuitive perception of this, expressing itself in a reluctance on his part to surrender himself entirely to the assurances of any such clairvoyants. But in the case of regularly initiated seers it must be remembered that we are dealing with a long—an extraordinarily long—series of persons who, warned of the confusing circumstances into which they pass when their spiritual perceptions are trained to range beyond material limits, are so enabled to penetrate to the actual realities of things, and who constitute a vast or-organized body of seers, who check each other's conclusions, test each other's discoveries and formulate their visions into a science of

spirit as precise and entirely trustworthy as, in their humble way, are the conclusions, as far as they go, of any branch of physical science. Such initiates are in the position, as regards spiritual knowledge, that the regularly taught professor of a great university is in, as regards literary knowledge, and anyone can appreciate the superior claims of instruction which might be received from him, as compared with the crude and imperfect instruction which might be offered by the merely self-taught man. The initiate's speculations, in fact, are not spun at all; they are laid out before him by the accumulated wisdom of ages, and he has merely followed, verified and assimilated them.

But, it may be argued, if our statement about the teachings of this absolutely trustworthy occult science claims to be something more than assertion and hypothesis, it is an assertion, and, for the world at large, an hypothesis, that any such continuously-taught body of initiates is anywhere in existence. Now, in reference to this objection, there are two observations to be made. Firstly, that there is a large mass of writings to be consulted on the subject, and if you will only read the literature of occultism it will be very strange if you still doubt that the continuity of initiation has been preserved. Secondly, we may point out that you may put the question about the existence of initiates altogether aside, and yet find in the philosophy of occultism, as expounded by those who do labour under the impression that they have received their teaching from competent instructors, such inherent claims to intellectual adoption, that it will be strange if you do not begin to respect it as an hypothesis.

Is it asked why we do not spread out the whole scroll of this much-vaunted philosophy at once, and so exhibit clearly its all-sufficing coherence? That question at least will hardly be asked by thoughtful men who realize what an all-sufficient philosophy of the universe must be. As well might Columbus have been expected to bring back America in his ships to Spain. "Good friends, America will not come," he might have said, "but it is there across the waters and if you voyage as I have done, and the waves do not smother you, mayhap you will find it too."

The exercise of *magical* power is the exercise of powers *natural*, but superior to the ordinary functions of Nature. A miracle is not a violation of the laws of Nature, except for ignorant people. Magic is but a *science*, a profound knowledge of the Occult forces in Nature, and of the laws governing the visible or the invisible world.

Spiritualism in the hands of an Adept becomes Magic, for he is learned in the art of blending together the laws of the universe, without breaking any of them and thereby violating Nature. In the hands of an experienced medium, Spiritualism becomes unconscious sorcery; for, by allowing himself to become the helpless tool of a variety of spirits, of whom he knows nothing, save what the latter permit him to know, he opens, unknown to himself, a door of communication between the two worlds, through which emerge the blind forces of Nature lurking in the astral light, as well as good and bad spirits.

A powerful mesmerizer, profoundly learned in his science, such as Baron Dupotet, and Regazzoni Pietro d'Amicis of Bologna, are *magicians,* for they have become the Adepts, the initiated ones, into the great mystery of our Mother Nature. Such men as the above-mentioned—and such were Mesmer and Cagliostro—*control* the spirits instead of allowing their subjects or themselves to be controlled by them; and Spiritualism is safe in their hands.

But to return to Magic. Such men as Albertus Magnus, Raymond Lulli, Cornelius Agrippa, Paracelsus, Robert Fludd, Eugenius Philalethes, Kunrath, Roger Bacon and others of similar character, in our sceptical century, are generally taken for visionaries; but so, too, are modern Spiritualists and mediums—nay worse, for charlatans and poltroons; but never were the Hermetic philosophers taken by anyone for fools and idiots, as, unfortunately for ourselves and the cause, every unbeliever takes all of us believers in Spiritualism to be. Those Hermetics and philosophers may be disbelieved and doubted now, as everything else is doubted, but very few doubted their knowledge and power during their lifetime, for they could always prove what they claimed, having command over those forces which *now command* helpless mediums. They had their science and demonstrated philosophy to help them to throw down ridiculous negations, while we sentimental Spiritualists, rocking ourselves to sleep with our "Sweet Bye-and-Bye," are now unable to recognize a spurious phenomenon from a genuine one, and are daily deceived by vile charlatans. Even though doubted then, as Spiritualism is in our day, still these philosophers were held in awe and reverence, even by those who did not implicitly believe in their Occult potency, for they were giants of intellect.

To doubt Magic is to reject History itself, as well as the testimony of ocular witnesses thereof, during a period embracing over 4,000

years. Beginning with Homer, Moses, Hermes, Herodotus, Cicero, Plutarch, Pythagoras, Apollonius of Tyana, Simon the Magician, Plato, Pausanias, Iamblichus, and following this endless string of great men—historians and philosophers, who all of them either believed in Magic or were magicians themselves—and ending with our modern authors, such as W. Howitt, Ennemoser, G. des Mousseaux, Marquis de Mirville and the late Eliphas Lévi, who was a magician himself—among all of these great names and authors, we find but the solitary Mr. Colby, editor of *The Banner of Light,* who ignores that there ever was such a science as Magic. He innocently believes the whole of the sacred army of Bible prophets, commencing with Father Abraham, including Christ, to be merely mediums; in the eyes of Mr. Colby they were all of them acting under control! Fancy Christ, Moses, or an Apollonius of Tyana, controlled by an Indian guide! The venerable editor ignores, perhaps, that spiritual mediums were better known in those days to the ancients, than they are now to us, and he seems to be equally unaware of the fact that the inspired sibyls, pythonesses, and other mediums were entirely guided by their high priest and those who were initiated into the esoteric theurgy and mysteries of the temples. Theurgy was Magic; as in modern times, the sibyls and pythonesses were mediums; but their high priests were magicians. All the secrets of their theology, which included Magic, or the art of invoking ministering spirits, were in their hands. They possessed the science of discerning spirits; a science which Mr. Colby does not possess at all—to his great regret, no doubt. By this power they controlled the spirits at will, allowing but the good ones to absorb their mediums. Such is the explanation of Magic—the real, existing, *White* or Sacred Magic, which ought to be in the hands of science now, and would be, if science had profited by the lessons which Spiritualism has inductively taught for these last twenty-seven years.

That is the reason why no trash was allowed to be given by unprogressed spirits in the days of old. The oracles of the sibyls and inspired priestesses could never have affirmed Athens to be a town in India, or jumped Mount Ararat from its native place down to Egypt.

There is a White and a Black Magic, and no one who has ever travelled in the East can doubt it, if he has taken the trouble to investigate . . . . Magic exists, and has existed, ever since prehistoric ages. Beginning in history with the Samothracian Mysteries, it fol-

lowed its course uninterruptedly, and ended for a time with the expiring theurgic rites and ceremonies of Christianized Greece; then reäppeared for a time again with the Neo-Platonic, Alexandrian school, and, passing by initiation to sundry solitary students and philosophers, safely crossed the mediæval ages, and notwithstanding the furious persecutions of the Church, resumed its fame in the hands of such Adepts as Paracelsus and several others, and finally died out in Europe with the Count St. Germain and Cagliostro, to seek refuge from frozen-hearted scepticism in its native country of the East.

The Bible, from Genesis to Revelations, is but a series of historical records of the great struggle between white and black Magic, between the Adepts of the right path, the Prophets, and those of the left, the Levites, the clergy of the brutal masses. Even the students of Occultism, though some of them have more archaic MSS. and direct teaching to rely upon, find it difficult to draw a line of demarcation between the *Sodales* of the Right Path and those of the Left. The great schism that arose between the sons of the Fourth Race, as soon as the first Temples and Halls of Initiation had been erected under the guidance of "the Sons of God," is allegorized in the Sons of Jacob. That there were two schools of Magic, and that the orthodox Levites did not belong to the *holy* one, is shown in the words pronounced by the dying Jacob. And here it may be well to quote a few sentences from *Isis Unveiled*.

The dying Jacob thus describes his sons: "Dan," he says, "shall be a *serpent* by the way, an *adder* in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backwards (*i.e.*, he will teach candidates *black* magic) . . . . I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord!" Of Simeon and Levi the patriarch remarks that they ". . . *are* brethren; instruments of *cruelty* are in their habitations. O my soul, come not thou into their *secret;* unto *their assembly*." (Gen. 49:5-6.) Now in the original, the words "their secret" really are "their SOD."[1] And Sod was the name for the great mysteries of Baal, Adonis and Bacchus, who were all sun-gods and had serpents for symbols. The Kabalists explain the allegory of the fiery serpents

[1] Dunlap, in his introduction to *Sod, the Mysteries of Adonis*, explains the word "Sod" as *arcanum*, religious mystery, on the authority of Schindler's *Penteglott*. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him," says Psalm 25:14. This is a mistranslation of the Christians, for it ought to read "*Sod Ihoh* (the mysteries of Ihoh) are for *those who fear him*" (Dunlap, *Mysteries of Adonis*, xi). "Al (El) is terrible in the great Sod of the *Kadeshim* (the priests, the holy, the *Initiated*), Psalm 89:7" (*Ibid*). The Kadeshim were very far from holy. (*Vide* Part II, *The Holy of Holies*.)

by saying that this was the name given to the tribe of Levi, to all the *Levites*, in short, and that Moses was the chief of the *Sodales*.[2] It is to the mysteries that the original meaning of the "Dragon-Slayers" has to be traced, and the question is fully treated of hereafter.

Meanwhile it follows that, if Moses was the chief of the Mysteries, he was the Hierophant thereof, and further, if, at the same time, we find the prophets thundering against the "abominations" of the people of Israel, that there were two schools. "Fiery serpents" was, then, simply the epithet given to the Levites of the priestly caste, after they had departed from the *good law*, the traditional teachings of Moses: and to all those who followed *Black Magic*. Isaiah, when referring to the "rebellious children" who will have to carry their riches into the land whence come "the viper and *fiery* flying *serpent*" (*xxx*. 6), or Chaldea and Egypt, whose Initiates had already greatly degenerated in his day (700 B.C.), meant the sorcerers of those lands.[3] But these must be carefully distinguished from the "Fiery Dragons of Wisdom" and the "Sons of the Fire Mist."

It so happens that we are in the Fourth Round, at the middle point of which the perfect equilibrium between Spirit and Matter had to take place. It was during the highest point of civilization and knowledge, as also of human intellectuality, of the fourth, Atlantean Race that, owing to the final crisis of physiologico-spiritual adjustment of the races, humanity branched off into its two diametrically opposite paths: the RIGHT- and the LEFT-hand paths of knowledge or of Vidya. *"Thus were the germs of the White and the Black Magic sown in those days. The seeds lay latent for some time, to sprout only during the early period of the Fifth (our Race)."*

The mysteries of Heaven and Earth, revealed to the Third Race by their celestial teachers in the days of their purity, became a great focus of light, the rays from which became necessarily weakened as they were diffused and shed upon an uncongenial, because too material soil. With the masses they degenerated into Sorcery, taking later on the shape of exoteric religions, of idolatry full of superstitions, and man-, or hero-worship. Alone a handful of primitive men—in whom the spark of divine Wisdom burnt bright, and only

[2] The members of the *priest-Colleges* were called *Sodales*," says Freund's *Latin Lexicon* (iv. 448). "Sodalities were constituted in the Idæan Mysteries of the MIGHTY MOTHER," writes *Cicero* in *de Senectute*. (*The Mysteries of Adonis*.)

[3] The priests of Baal who jumped over the fires. But this was a Hebrew term and a local one. "Saraph"—"fiery or flaming venom."

strengthened in its intensity as it got dimmer and dimmer with every age in those who turned it to bad purposes—remained the elect custodians of the Mysteries revealed to mankind by the divine Teachers. There were those among them, who remained in their *Kumâric* condition from the beginning; and tradition whispers, what the secret teachings affirm, namely, that these Elect were the germ of a Hierarchy *which never died since that period*:

> *The inner man of the first * * * only changes his body from time to time; he is ever the same, knowing neither rest nor Nirvana, spurning Devachan and remaining constantly on Earth for the salvation of mankind. . . . . Out of the seven virgin-men* (Kumâra) *four sacrificed themselves for the sins of the world and the instruction of the ignorant, to remain till the end of the present Manvantara. Though unseen, they are ever present. When people say of one of them, "He is dead"; behold, he is alive and under another form. These are the Head, the Heart, the Soul, and the Seed of undying knowledge* (Gnyana). *Thou shalt never speak, O Lanoo, of these great ones* (Maha . . .) *before a multitude, mentioning them by their names. The wise alone will understand. . . .*[4] (Catechism of the inner Schools.)

[4]In the Kabala the pronunciation of the four-lettered *ineffable* name is "a most secret arcanum"—"a secret of secrets."

PRIMEVAL TRANSMISSION

The more closely one studies pre-Christian Theology, the more strongly one is impressed with the deeply, and daringly, spiritual character of its speculations, and the more doubtful it appears that such teaching can depend upon the unaided processes of human thought, or can have been evolved from such germs as we find among the supposedly "primitive" peoples, such as for example, the Australian tribes. Are they really primitive? Or are we dealing, not with the primary elements of religion, but with the *disjecta membra* of a vanished civilization? Certain it is that so far as historical evidence goes our earliest records point to the recognition of a spiritual, not of a material, origin of the human race. . . . [They are] surviving fragments of a worship from which the higher significance has vanished.

—JESSIE L. WESTON

IS THEOSOPHY A "REVELATION"?

> In thus affording even the superficial thinker and the weak or illogical reasoner a perfect basis for ethics and an unerring guide in life, Theosophy is building toward the future realization of the Universal Brotherhood and the higher evolution of man. . . . It involves a process of thought almost unknown to the present age of empiricism and induction. It is a revelation from archaic ages, indestructible and eternal, yet capable of being obscured and lost; capable of being again and again reborn, or like man himself—reincarnated.
>
> WILLIAM Q. JUDGE

IS Mr. Judge "right" in calling Theosophy a "revelation"? If one consults the first page of the Preface to *The Secret Doctrine,* it will be found that the author says that the truths in this book "are in no sense put forward as a revelation," and that she does not "claim the position of a revealer of mystic lore, now made public for the first time in the world's history."

Reading on, however, we find H.P.B. (xxx) calling as witnesses to the reality of the Wisdom Religion "learned writers" of the last century who insisted that there must have been "fragments of a primeval revelation, granted to the ancestors of the whole race of mankind. . . . preserved in the temples of Greece and Italy," . . . And in the Proem (pp. 9 and 10) it becomes apparent that the usage of "revelation" to which H.P.B. objects is that applied to "the God of human dogma and his humanized 'Word'." "Revelation" is acceptable, or not acceptable, depending upon the source to which it is attributed—since that source governs the manner in which it is received by human beings. The passage in the Proem illustrates this distinction. Rejected is the "human dogma" of which H.P.B. says:

> In his infinite conceit and infinite pride and vanity man shaped it himself with his sacrilegious hand out of the material he found in his own small brain-fabric, and forced it upon mankind as a direct revelation from the one unrevealed SPACE.

On the other hand—

> The occultist accepts revelation as coming from divine yet

still finite Beings, the manifested lives, never from the Unmanifestable ONE LIFE; from those entities, called Primordial Man, Dhyani-Buddhas, or Dhyan-Chohans, the "Rishi-Prajapati" of the Hindus, the Elohim or "Sons of God," the Planetary Spirits of all nations, who have become Gods for men.

Of the uses that may be made of "revelation" from such high intelligences, we have ample discussion by H.P.B. in her articles, "What Is Truth?" and "Is Theosophy a Religion?" The law involved in the work of these teachers is that of the Guruparampara chain, spoken of in the *Letters* of Mr. Judge, by means of which continuity of knowledge is maintained between "generations" of souls, and the wisdom of those who have achieved consciousness on higher planes is made available to aspiring human beings, from cycle to cycle.

Further light on this question is obtained from H.P.B.'s comment on a long passage quoted in *The Secret Doctrine* (I, 308-9) from Ralston Skinner. At its conclusion Mr. Skinner remarks that there are very strong evidences to show that there once existed "a perfect language and system of science," to which he added that "it would seem that in the history of the human race there happened, from causes which at present, at any rate, we cannot trace, a lapse or loss from an original and perfect language and a perfect system of science—shall we say perfect because they were of divine origin and importation?" H.P.B.'s comment follows:

"Divine origin" does not mean here a revelation from an anthropomorphic god on a mount amidst thunder and lightning; but, as we understand it, a language and a system of science imparted to the early mankind by a more advanced *mankind,* so much higher as to be *divine* in the sight of that infant humanity. By a "mankind," in short, from other spheres; an idea which contains nothing supernatural in it, but the acceptance or rejection of which depends upon the degree of conceit and arrogance in the mind of him to whom it is stated. For, if the professors of modern knowledge would only confess that, though they know nothing of the future of the disembodied man—or rather will accept nothing—yet this future may be pregnant with surprises and unexpected revelations to them, once their Egos are rid of their gross bodies—then materialistic unbelief would have fewer chances than it has. Who of them knows, or can tell, what may happen when once the life cycle of this globe is run down and our mother herself falls into her last sleep? Who is bold enough to say that the *divine Egos* of our mankind—at least the elect out of the multitudes passing on to other spheres—*will not become in their turn* the "divine" instructors of a new mankind

generated by them on a new globe, called to life and activity by the disembodied "principles" of our Earth?

On page 356 (I), H.P.B. gives unequivocal illustration of the context in which the word "revelation" is a justified term. After showing common elements in the world's religions, she remarks:

> Whence then, all this identity of ideas, if there was no primeval UNIVERSAL Revelation? The few points shown are like a few straws in a hayrick, in comparison to that which will be shown as the work proceeds.

The key words here seem to be "primeval" and "universal," giving H.P.B.'s use of "revelation" a character distinct from that of sectarian religion. A final distinguishing point is the insistence again and again that revelation is a part of nature's processes bound up with the beginnings of cycles. As remarked in the closing pages of *The Secret Doctrine* (797):

> It was necessary to show that no religion, since the very earliest, has ever been entirely based on fiction, as none was the object of special revelation; and that it is dogma alone which has ever been killing primeval truth. Finally, that no human-born doctrine, no creed, however sanctified by custom and antiquity, can compare in sacredness with the religion of Nature.

And so it is that in her Preface, H.P.B. observed that *The Secret Doctrine* "claims consideration, not by any reason of appeal to dogmatic authority, but because it closely adheres to Nature, and follows the laws of uniformity and analogy," and adds in the Introductory: "It is above everything important to keep in mind that no theosophical book acquires the least additional value from pretended authority."

"Revelation," then, is a fact and a possibility in life and nature by reason of the potentiality of spiritual understanding with which each human being is endowed—a potentiality realized, for example, by Arjuna in the eleventh discourse of the *Bhagavad-Gita*. Arjuna was ready for what Krishna was then able to "reveal" to him.

But the abuse and imitation of this great law of nature was such in H.P.B.'s time that the very word "revelation" had become an epithet in the vocabulary of free-thinking men, and was used in this sense in her Preface, while later on, in the context of exposition of the spiritual realities of human evolution, she used the word in its original, unblemished meaning, for the benefit of those who, as serious students, could be expected not to misunderstand her intent

on the lookout

"Reincarnation in World Thought"

The volume of this title is a thoroughly revised edition of an earlier work—*Reincarnation: An East-West Anthology*. Both are edited by Joseph Head and S. L. Cranston, and published by Julian Press. A larger and more complete book, *Reincarnation in World Thought* is priced at $8.50. Turning its pages, the reader is overwhelmingly impressed by the way in which the idea of many lives on earth threads its unity throughout the thought of many contemporary minds, as well as forming the substratum of the religious philosophies of antiquity. One might say that a study of this book will also clarify an important distinction between what we think of as ancient thought and the less systematic philosophy of modern times. In the distant past, philosophical ideas such as reincarnation formed a part of great religious systems; in the present, however, and for the past two or three hundred years, reincarnation appears in association with a striking independence of mind—the idea is *chosen*, not absorbed from the cultural milieu.

A Philosophic Idea

To read this book is to feel the presence of minds which have been filled from within with awareness of eternal egoity, and which accept the idea of rebirth as a natural reality. One sees the passage of the soul and its peregrinations from body to body as the spontaneous inspiration of great poets and also the measured conclusion of philosophers. The Theosophic philosophy has clear if brief presentation in *Reincarnation in World Thought*, and the careful reader may be expected to see that in Theosophy reincarnation becomes more than an irrepressible intuition—it begins to take on the majestic content that is suggested by Mr. Judge in "Synthesis of Occult Science." This book should prove invaluable as an introduction to the study of Theosophy.

Purported Reincarnations

The stories of two Indian girls who believe they remember incidents of a former life are being investigated by Prof. Hemendra Banerjee, of Rajasthan University, Jaipur. Prof. Banerjee told a reporter for the *Evening Standard* (London, July, 21):

> Vishala [a 13-year-old girl living in Bhopal] believes she was once Dr. Jaimini Watt—attached to a London hospital, daughter of a judge, and victim of a car accident one stormy night. She "remembers" that her father had left for Africa on the day of the accident; that she had a lover named Abraham, an assistant named Dr. Walker, and a servant named Jack; that she used to wear checked shoes, that her mother had a friend named Sairiya, and that—at the time of the crash—her brother was in the car too.
>
> Her memories are very clear and living. She often weeps and asks to return "home" to England to see members of her family.

"Most Intriguing Case of All"

The preliminary investigation of the case of Mohini [a 9-year-old child] has already been completed. As Prof. Banerjee tells her story:

> Mohini was sitting with her family over breakfast at home in the Punjab about a year ago when the subject of New York came up. "I've been there," she said, and began describing the place in detail. At first her parents thought she was romancing. But later they began taking notes of what she said.
>
> She said she had lived in New York one hundred years ago with her uncle. She described the area in detail—even down to the cobblestones—the food she ate, the games she used to play at Christmas, how she used to go to a festival every so often, and so on. She even gave the family name, and said she had been drowned at eighteen.

Finally, Mohini became so emotionally upset that she was unable to attend to her studies, so Prof. Banerjee flew to New York to try to verify her memories. The result, as told by the interviewer:

> He found the family—now several generations older—in precisely the spot where the girl claimed they lived; and he matched ninety-four other details of her story against reality. He returned to India with family photographs, mixed them up with others, and confronted Mohini with them. She picked out all the "family" correctly.

Now Prof. Banerjee is taking Mohini to New York for a visit which he hopes will have fruitful results. On his return to London, Prof. Banerjee will thoroughly investigate Vishala's "memories."

Other Explanations?

When asked if Mohini mightn't have read it all in a book, Prof. Banerjee replied: "It's just possible; but it was a living memory and obviously affected her terribly." He added:

> To call these phenomena "reincarnations" may be going too far. There could be alternative explanations. We know the human mind can acquire information and knowledge to which it has had no direct access—it is a vast region into which we have only just peeped. I have an open mind on the subject—I simply follow up the facts.

As Dr. J. B. Rhine said in summing up his discussion of the Bridey Murphy case which caused such a furor several years ago:

> For the careful thinker I need not warn against the tendency to take these experiences in themselves as final and adequate evidence of anything. That is not the fair and proper way to treat them. . . . But just as one must not take them as proof, so one cannot and should not dismiss them all as worthless superstition or mere coincidence. It is enough at this stage to know that in these experiences something of the unrecognized nature of man probably is being revealed.

Again the Question, "When is Death?"

The time has come when a legal redefinition of death is imperative, says Francis E. Camps, a professor of forensic medicine (*Science Journal*, London, June). In times past, restoration of life was comparatively rare, he remarks, although even in the Bible (II Kings 4:34) "an almost perfect description of mouth-to-mouth respiration" is given. But now modern techniques of resuscitation make invalid the legal definition of death—cessation of breathing. He explains:

> If the heart stops then there will be a flat electrocardiogram (ECG) and also a flat electroencephalogram (EEG). If, however, respiration stops but the heart continues beating the ECG and the EEG will still show waves and, in fact, it will be possible to maintain normal life by the use of a mechanical respirator. This is not an uncommon procedure and is carried out, for example, in cases of lung paralysis resulting from acute anterior poliomyelitis. In this way a useful life can be maintained if the patient is otherwise normal. This possibility renders invalid the concept of cessation of respiration as an indication of death.

Problem not Always so Simple

The moral and legal problems arise when both heart and lung action has stopped for an appreciable length of time, for, according

to Prof. Camps, "there are two kinds of death": somatic, or death of the body as a whole; and cellular, death of individual cells from lack of oxygen. The cells of the brain and spinal cord are particularly vulnerable to oxygen starvation, succumbing in from ten to twenty minutes. It is therefore possible to restore the heartbeat and respiration without restoring the central nervous system. However—

> In such an event the central nervous system may also be restored to some extent: it may still be able to control movement of the limbs and to respond to tactile sensations. But the subject may remain unconscious, unable to express himself and apparently incapable of thought; such a person is deprived of those very powers which would normally be most characteristic of his existence. Can such a person, living in a "vegetable" state, be more strictly said to be dead or alive?
>
> The power of expression and thought—the higher functions of the brain—can be regarded as part of what in philosophical terms is called the "mind" or "soul." The mind has been called the "seat of consciousness," frequently in implied or expressed control of the body, while the soul is defined as the "principle of thought and action in man," commonly regarded as an entity distinct from the body. When death occurs in a human being there is a loss of mental capacity as well as loss of physical functions. Because we can maintain physical life in the absence of the higher functions of the brain we clearly need to revise our definition of death.

When is the "Person" Dead?

Prof. Camps discusses in detail several of the moral and legal issues involved, noting that under present laws a doctor is liable to a charge of homicide if he removes the mechanical aids to bodily existence. (See also THEOSOPHY 54:379.) His suggestion for defining "death," however, lends itself to philosophical consideration:

> A perhaps somewhat unscientific but practical argument that could be used in defining death is to say that, if the mind is identified with the central nervous system, then when it can be shown that the central nervous system is incapable of recovery the person is dead. It could equally well be argued that ceasing the use of a respirator or failing to give treatment would not be homicide because death would be the natural course of events had the patient not been treated at all.
>
> Two scientific methods of establishing death are available. Firstly, there is the EEG which, if the brain is completely nonfunctioning, will show a flat wave. If such a flat wave persists for a given time, say twelve hours, then it could safely be claimed

that the damage was irreversible. So, too, direct examination of brain tissue by biopsy could also be used as a yardstick.

The "First Death"?

Prof. Camps' suggested interval of twelve hours coincides with the approximate time during which, according to theosophical teaching, "the real man is busy in the brain, and not until his work there is ended is the person gone." In such cases as Dr. Camps describes, the following passage from *The Ocean of Theosophy* (p. 107) should provide a basis for reflection:

> In the state of *kama loka* suicides and those who are suddenly shot out of life by accident or murder, legal or illegal, pass a term almost equal to the length life would have been but for the sudden termination. These are not really dead. To bring on a normal death, a factor not recognized by medical science must be present. That is, the principles of the being as described in other chapters have their own term of cohesion, at the natural end of which they separate from each other under their own laws. This involves the great subject of the cohesive forces of the human subject. . . . Hence a suicide, or person killed by accident or murdered by man or by order of human law, has not come to the natural termination of the cohesion among the other constituents, and is hurled into the *kama loka* state only partly dead. There the remaining principles have to wait until the actual natural life term is reached, whether it be one month or sixty years.

In the dilemmas raised by thoughtful physicians such as Prof. Camps, one sees the frustrating consequences of the advance of the techniques of scientific medicine far beyond the scope of "medical" ethics as understood in an age when life is identified with the body. To preserve life is a laudable commitment for the physician, but how shall he tell when his artificial methods do not prolong life, but only a living death? Without a conception of the fitness of things, based upon clear ideas concerning the relation of the soul to the body, medical men tend to fall back on the simplest sort of materialism and to suppose that it is their duty to prolong the merely animal or even vegetable existence of the physical organism. Their skill in doing this may be technically impressive, but what is done to the natural life-cycle of the ego who can no longer *use* the body? The dignity of life grows from purposes fulfilled while in a body. The dignity of death arises when the ego *lets go* of a body that will no longer serve those purposes. It is no part of the Hippocratic commitment to prevent that letting go.

How It Feels to Die

A personal experience with "death" and return to life is reported by David Snell, senior editor of *Life,* in an article, "How It Feels to Die" (May 26). There is no doubt in Mr. Snell's mind that his experience was genuine. He says in his opening paragraph, "A little more than 24 hours ago, as I write this, I learned what it is like to die." Although much of the article is concerned with the physiological events, Mr. Snell seems primarily concerned with communicating the psychological and even transcendental insights gained from his encounter. He found the experience was neither terrifying nor grim. Within three minutes of reaching what seemed the point of no return, he said, "a kind of euphoria was setting in. It was marked by exaggerated good humor, a sense of detachment and, I noted even as I experienced it, a hyper-alertness which seemed to furnish me with superior logic and reason."

Between Two Worlds

The events leading up to this crisis resulted from a self-administered dose of penicillin bringing on anaphylactic shock (rapid failure of the vital functions). Mr. Snell expresses indebtedness to his doctor for helping him to reconstruct the details of his experience, for, in retrospect, he realized he had been on the threshold of what he called "life's supreme mystery." He remembers trying to say: "Listen, I want to tell you just how it is, describe it to you . . . please write it down. . . ." Students may see in Mr. Snell's report interesting evidence of the theosophical teaching that consciousness is neither interrupted nor obliterated by death, but that it is simply a transition state for the Ego; for, having reached what doctors call "clinical death," Mr. Snell experienced continuing transitions of awareness. As he puts it:

> External awareness had slipped away—I heard, saw nothing. I sagged forward as my wife held my head to keep me from pitching from the chair. To the doctor I had reached clinical death. But for me there was a surge of internal awareness—magnified, finely focussed, brilliant.
>
> In the last extreme seconds, only *awareness* remained of the vital functions. As the crisis deepened, I was acutely, almost electrically, aware of things around me and then, when this awareness receded, of things *within me.* I was an enthralled eyewitness to my own rapidly advancing demise.
>
> It was a turbulent experience but not at all terrifying—and it had its moments, as I recall them now, of pure black humor. At

the end I gazed into something that I believe to be life's supreme mystery.

The Orderly Processes of Life—in Death

Mr. Snell had apparently passed through the preliminary stages of death only. Though he does not speculate on the philosophical implications of his impressions, it is evident that he was profoundly aware of death as an orderly process:

> It is a progressive thing, this death. You feel the toes going first, then the feet, cell by cell, death churning them like waves washing the sands. Now the legs, the cells winking out. Closer now, and the visibility is better. Hands, arms, abdomen and chest, each cell flaring into a supernova, then gone. There is order and system in death, as in all that is life. I must try to control the progression, to save the brain for last so that it may know. Now the neck. The lower jaw. The teeth. How strange to feel one's teeth die, one by one, cell igniting cell, galaxies of cells dying in brilliance.

The Vision of the Ego

At present, men are largely engrossed in the activities of the objective universe. Yet, under extreme physical or mental pressure, the attention may be distracted from forms and objects to a momentary realization of subjective reality. The attempts of men in the past to record such experiences imply that the "vision" is not so much seen as something *felt* about identity. Mr. Snell's attempt to record this feeling indicates that he grasped something beyond the range of everyday experience:

> Now, in retrospect, I grope for this other thing. There was *something* else, something that I felt or experienced or beheld at the very last moment. What was it? I knew it so well when it was there, opening before me, something more beautiful, more gentle, more loving than the mind or imagination of living creature could ever conceive, but it is gone.

The ancients taught that death is but a vestibule through which the soul returns to its own place in the wider reaches of consciousness. The Adept, it is said, is able to go through every state in full consciousness, with no loss of identity. This is a possibility for every man, providing he pursues the necessary disciplines. Meanwhile, we may regard all instances of clarity in our lives as stepping-stones to sustained awareness. In the language of the Upanishads, death loses its hopelessness and frustration and becomes instead a voyage of the soul:

> When he falls into weakness, whether it be through old age or sickness he falls into weakness, then like as a mango or the fruit of the wave-leafed fig or of the holy fig-tree is loosened from its stem, so the Spirit of man is loosed from these bodily members, and returns again by the same pathway to its former dwelling-place in the Life.

Instinct for Violence Not Basic to Man

"There is no such thing as a natural human instinct for violence and destructiveness," according to Dr. Isidore Ziferstein, a Cedars-Sinai Medical Center psychiatrist (Los Angeles *Times,* June 22). Dr. Ziferstein points to many isolated societies, such as the Zuni Indians of Arizona and the pygmies of Africa, who "get along very well without fighting their neighbors or each other the way we do," disproving the popular theory that man has violent behavior built into his nature.

Dr. Ziferstein indicates that in 30 years of practice he has *invariably* found that life experiences account for the hostility and suppressed or expressed violence of his patients. "One of the life experiences most conducive to violence," he said, "is the competitiveness of Western society, where traits like aggressiveness have a real survival value." Further, "this competitiveness is lacking in the primitive societies that are more pacific than we." He thinks "people who are brought up without the strong urge to compete for riches and status have a better and happier life than those who take part in dog-eat-dog competition."

Effect of Rigid Behavior Patterns

Also lacking in the primitive societies, Dr. Ziferstein, says, "is the marked differentiation between what is considered seemly behavior for men and women." He continues:

> In our society almost from the moment a child is born he begins to learn that some things are wrong for boys to do and other things are wrong for girls. We'd be better off if we didn't set up such strict rules of correct and incorrect behavior. In the pacific societies men are not forced to be brave. People who are secretly afraid often try to overcome their fears by acting braver and stronger than others, and by treating other people roughly and with violence.

Dr. Ziferstein feels strongly that competition is at the bottom of much violence, "since the system fosters the ambition to outdo others and thus also fosters lack of feeling for others." He thinks

that while hiring more police officers may be necessary "it is not the way to solve the problem of the prevalence of violence." Rather, "what we need is an agonizing reappraisal of the bases of our society. Competition has made Western man rich but it has also made him miserable."

A passage in Madame Blavatsky's *Secret Doctrine,* written in the last century, sounds a confirming note. In a discussion on Karma she had this to say:

> With right knowledge, or at any rate with a confident conviction that our neighbors will no more work to hurt us than we would think of harming them, the two-thirds of the world's evil would vanish into thin air. Were no man to hurt his brother, Karma-Nemesis would have neither cause to work for, nor weapons to act through. It is the constant presence in our midst of every element of strife and opposition, and the division of races, tribes, societies and individuals into Cains and Abels, wolves and lambs, that is the chief cause of the "ways of Providence." (*S.D.* I, 643.)

Madame Blavatsky also stated (*S.D.* II, 110) that "in sober truth, vice and wickedness are an abnormal, unnatural manifestation, at this period of our human evolution—at least they ought to be so." The theosophical philosophy would enable mankind to see both the necessity and the means for eliminating the causes for violence and destruction.

May Inferences be Drawn?

From the *Milwaukee Journal* (Nov. 20, 1966):

> Dr. David Krech at the University of California has reported increased chemical activity in the brains of rats given challenging jobs to do.
>
> One group of rats was given a community cage and a variety of "toys" to play with. Another group was put in isolation. The active rats developed bigger brains than the deprived rats. They also had more large blood vessels serving the brains and more brain cells containing essential nerve chemicals.

One hesitates to draw any conclusions for man from animal research, but it is perhaps permissible to point out that the right way to get a better supply of needed "chemicals" in the brain is doubtless by using the brain with greater energy. But we didn't really need rat experiments to find this out! All organs get their best development from constructive use.

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